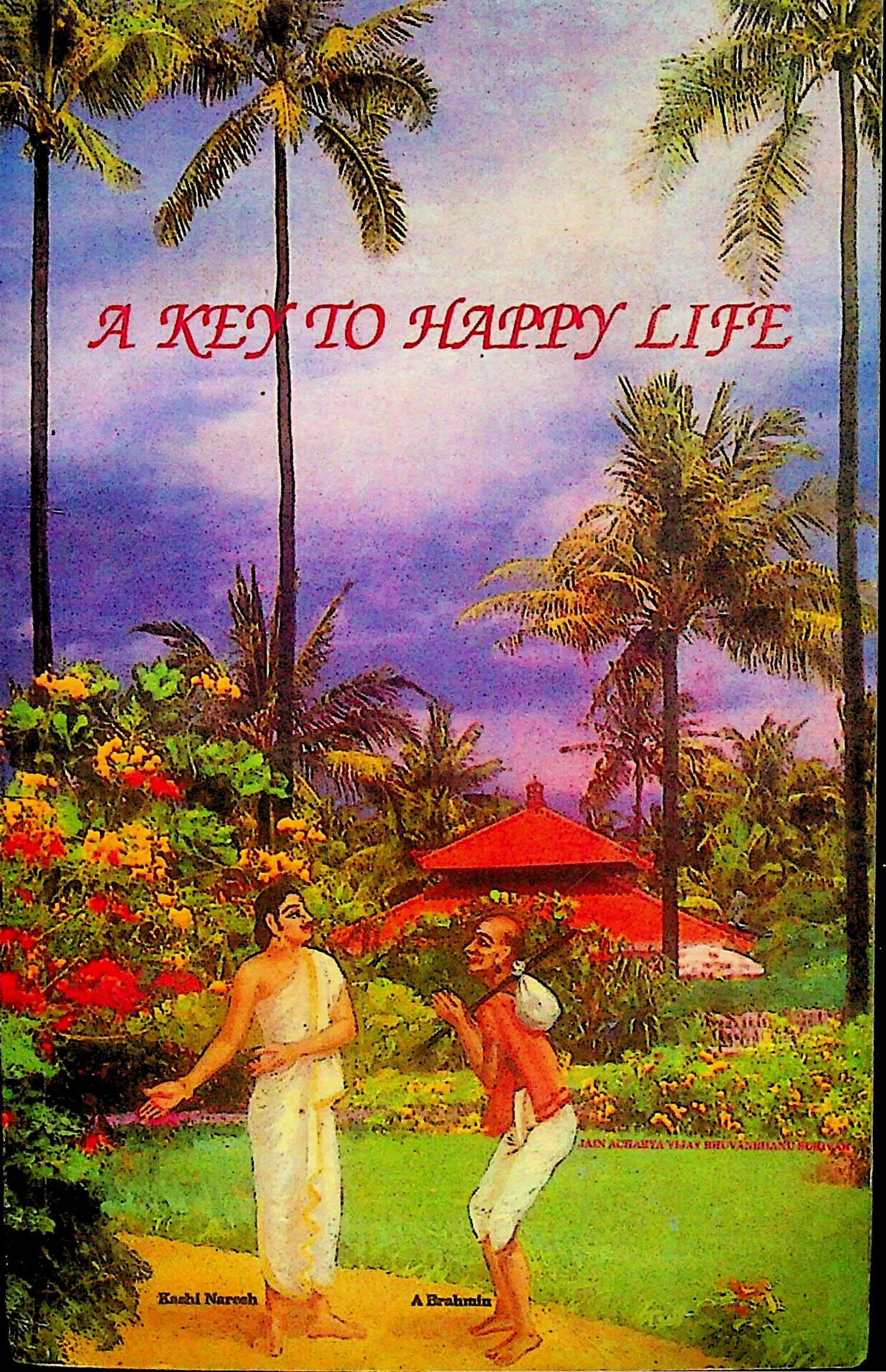
A KEY TO HAPPY LIFE

JAIN ACHARYA VIJAY BHUVANBHANU SURIVAR



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A FOREWORD BY THE TRANSLATOR

This is an English version prepared by me of the Hindi book entitled "Kshamapana" written by the Revered Acharya Sri Bhuvanbhanu Sooriswarji Maharaj, a scriptural scholar of outstanding eminence. The book reveals his astounding spiritual excellence and the loftiness of his thought and feeling. It deals with the theme of forgiveness but this message is presented through highly interesting and captivating stories and anecdotes. While reading the stories, we imbibe the message of the stories unconsciously. This is the best way to communicate spiritual messages. Bernard Shaw wrote his plays not merely to provide entertainment to his spectators and readers but to impart to them his ideas on a variety of subjects including his philosophy of Creative Evolution. If he wanted merely to expound his theories, his prefaces would have sufficed but he wrote plays presenting those theories through them. The Revered Acharya Shri Bhuvanabhanu Sooriswarji Maharaj has also adopted the method of communicating the message of forgiveness through artistically narrated stories and anecdotes. The book begins with delight and ends in wisdom.

I translated this book into English in accordance with the sacred wish of the Gurumaharaj and as desired by the publishers. I thank them for choosing me to render this book into English.

K. Ramappa.

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A FOREWORD BY THE PUBLISHERS

We are extremely happy to place in your hands this book entitled, "A key to happy Life", which is an English version of the Hindi Book "Kṣhamapana" written by the Revered Acharya Sri Bhuvanabhanu Soorishwarji Maharaj. The Revered Acharyashri has written many books with the purpose of providing enlightenment to the readers, and thus to enable them to attain spiritual elevation.

This book deals with the theme of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a lofty ideal and when it is practised by us, it surely brings us boundless spiritual benefit. The Revered Acharya Shri, who is a profound scriptural scholar, has explained in this book the value of forgiveness by means of highly interesting and illuminating stories and anecdotes.

We hope that the readers of the book will enjoy it, and will attain spiritual benefit from it.

Forgiveness brings spiritual prosperity.

PUBLISHERS



*The name of **Shri Kapurchandji** (Prathishtan S. Kapurchand and company) is famous throughout India, among the members of the Jain Society. He has been utilizing his wealth, which is the fruit of his noble deeds in his previous births, for the construction of countless temples, religious centres, schools, Ayamvil shalas and shelters for cattle. He has been magnanimously extending his financial aid and cooperation for the construction and establishment of such noble institutions. It is on account of the ununificence and a magnanimity of such noble people that the golden glory of the Jain Shasan remains resplendent; and the golden vessel of its fame stands high. This book also has been published with the financial aid extended by him. **The Bangalore Jain Society** is proud of such lovers of Dharma, non-violence and knowledge and such men of magnanimity and nobility.*

CONTENTS

A KEY TO HAPPY LIFE

What is the extent of complaints in life?

How deeply are we interested in leading our life today? Generally, we always keep complaining against something or some individual. At the same time, attachments and hatred keep agitating our minds. Various kinds of worries and agitations keep burning in our hearts like flames. This defect in facilities is due to our defective 'Punya' i.e. good fortune. So, when our Punya (good fortune) has declined, is there no way of reducing our complaints and grievances? Is there no way to a happy life?

Yes . There is a way. If we assimilate the virtues of tolerance and forgiveness, those ghosts of agitations and anguish will disappear naturally; and our life will become peaceful and felicitous having been totally freed from those agitations and agonies, and ours will be a happy life.

Once, while a discussion was going on about the theme of agitation, in the presence of Mikado, the Emperor of Japan, someone said: "Your Excellency! The family of your retired Chief Minister, who is old and weak, and is aged one hundred years, which contains his six sons, grand-sons, their sons and daughters-in-law, attendants and servants, is happy and peaceful and though a large family, is free from all worries and agitations. You can find out from him the secret of it".

The Emperor sent a Minister to that old Minister to find out the secret. The old Chief Minister wrote out his answer on a paper; sealed it in an envelope, and sent it to the Emperor. When the Emperor opened the envelope, and read it,he found that the same word, "Tolerance" had been written on the paper one hundred times. What was that puzzle? The wise and sensible minister said: "Your Excellency! The Chief Minister has been tolerant and forgiving even from his boyhood. After his marriage, he taught this lofty principle to

his wife. He instilled this ideal even into the minds of his children. He taught the same principle to all his attendants and servants and to others, saying:

"In this sublime human birth, we should set this lofty ideal before us always. In case some harm is caused to us by others, we should bear with it patiently. In the same manner, we should bear with any calamity, disease, disgrace or censure with a feeling of tolerance. This will bring peace to us and to others." On account of this kind of preaching not only the members of his family but even the pet dogs also in his house are leading a peaceful life. The dogs never bark. Thus the family of our old Chief Minister is living in peace and felicity.

Tolerance is the only key to a happy life. How can we attain tolerance? It appears in us when we think that our life will be glorious on account of it and when we adopt that virtue and practise it. When we read the life-histories of the great men of the world, we find that tolerance and forgiveness constitute the basic cause of their greatness. In respect of this here is an instance of the Maharajā of Bhavnagar.

BHAVNAGAR- KING'S TOLERANCE AND NOBILITY

In a garden, a certain boy threw a stone at a mango tree to secure a mango, but the stone hit the King of Bhavnagar, who had come into the garden for a walk. The guards at once searched for the boy, caught him and brought him before the King. The boy shaking with fear, and weeping said,"My lord! kindly forgive me. I threw the stone at a mango, but it hit you and hurt you". The King ordered two rupees to be given to the boy; and said "Look here! This inert and inanimate tree gives a reward of a mango worth two annas to a boy who throws a stone at it. But I am a living being and a human being; so I must give two rupees as a reward to a boy who throws a stone at me".

Please think about this. If the King, instead of giving him two rupees, had given him two slaps on his cheeks would that action have brought glory to him? He gave the boy two rupees and forgave him. His forgiveness brought him glory; did it not? The jiva that has attained such a lofty state as the human birth attains glory only by means of forgiveness; because we should lead a life that is as lofty as the state of existence (birth) we have reached. .Life is deemed sublime not when a man responds to anger with anger, not by the policy of "a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye", but by responding to anger with forgiveness. Angry retaliation is the way adopted by even wild animals of the forest like the lion, but on account of this, their life is not called lofty; on the contrary, it is said to be low and despicable.

It is for this reason that Bhagwan Mahavir, the supreme lord of the three worlds forgave even wicked people; and gave to the world the message of forgiveness for the attainment of spiritual elevation. Hence the sublime quality of forgiveness has been given a very important place in the Paryushana festival, "Forgiveness" is to beg forgiveness from others. '"Forgiveness" is essential in the annual festival of Paryushan even for the reason that if we do not forgive others and if we do not seek the forgiveness of others for a year the Kashayas like enmity and hatred towards others will remain intact and unimpeded in our hearts, and hence our Samyaktva (the right faith) will be lost. Therefore; at least in the annual Paryushan-festival we should extend and seek forgiveness.

We hesitate to give up or unite the knots of hostility caused by ordinary and common incidents even in such a grand festival as the Paryushan, but think of the action of our Bhagawan Mahavir. The Lord bestowed forgiveness on that wicked and cruel deity Sangam. Not only that; there surged out such a spring of compassion and affection in his heart that his eyes welled up with tears. In the same manner, you also think of the forgiveness of our illustrious ancestors like

Gajasukumal muni, Khandhak muni and Khandhaksuri's five hundred disciples.

The greatness of our country is such that a noble son of hers, the King of Kashi, displayed extraordinary love for his subjects and extended forgiveness and amity to his enemy, the King of Koshal even in an adverse situation. His magnificent action is worthy of note. Here you see what he did.

The Kings of Kashi and Koshal :

Our mind should show the highest kind of forgiveness to others. Such a mind is a blessing to our soul. The mind that is filled with anger, animosity and hatred will be a curse to our soul.

Therefore, the duty of human beings is to extend to others the highest kind of forgiveness. Even if some one has committed the worst kind of sins, we should forgive him and we should try our best to impel him to discard his animosity and hostility.

The admiration of the King of Kashi in the Court of the King of Koshal.

People praised heartily the virtues of the King of Kashi. The King of Koshal could not tolerate such praise given to the King of Kashi. "In my court, people do not praise me; why do they foolishly praise the virtues of the King of Kashi?" The King of Koshal thought thus,but how could he stop the people from talking thus? How could he say, "Stop talking thus. Stop praising the King of Kashi"?. Then he thought that there was only one way to stop people from praising the King of Kashi thus. He thought, "I will defeat and dethrone the King of Kashi. I will take away the Kingship from him. Then people will not admire the King of Kashi saying that he is generous towards his subjects and peaceful by nature".

Thinking thus the King of Koshal set off with his armies to wage a war against the King of Kashi. He was confident of defeating the King of Kashi within no time. But the King of

Kashi did not give him the occasion for a war. Then did he surrender himself to the King of Koshal? No. He did not also surrender himself to the King of Koshal. Then how was the war avoided? This is something worthy of being known.

THE SUBLIME WORDS OF THE KING OF KASHI:

The guards safeguarding the borders of the Kingdom of Kashi approached the King and conveyed to him this news, "The King of Koshal is approaching with a vast army with the purpose of capturing our Kingdom". On hearing this news, the King of Kashi thought for a while and then sent for his Ministers; and said to them, "Look here, dear ministers! the king of Koshal desires our kingdom and he is marching towards our Kingdom with the purpose of capturing our Kingdom. If this war takes place countless innocent people of our kingdom will experience inordinate agony, anguish and loss. Why should we allow this to happen? This dispute is between us two as to who should be the King of Kashi? This is the issue and you desire this to be settled by the war. But why should we cause perplexity and agony to our people in our endeavour to fulfil our selfish ambitions? "Kindly go to the King of Koshal and tell him, " A war is unnecessary; a war of this kind will cause inordinate pain and suffering to our people; and since you desire our Kingdom, you may occupy it and we will not offer any kind of resistance." You go and tell him "the throne of Kashi is vacant and you may ascend it". You also tell him, "We ourselves will crown you the King of Kashi". This will avoid the impending war and our people will not be put to any loss or suffering". You also tell him that for his sake the King of Kashi has sacrificed his Kingship of Kashi; and that the King has gone away to the forests. "Go to him. Welcome him and crown him King of Kashi". How lofty is the mind of the King of Kashi ! How sublime are his thoughts and feelings!

Did the ministers readily accede to this plan of the King? No. They said,"Your Excellency! What are you saying? We do not care even to lose our lives and we will wage a terrible war against him. When that is so, he can never dream of defeating us".

The king of Kashi said, "Of course, I know that you will wage a terrible war, but during the war-time the armies will cause untold miseries to our innocent people. Our people will have to face pain, loss and death. I will not allow our people to suffer thus.

Whether I am the King of this country, or whether the king of Koshal rules over this country, it makes no difference so far as the people are concerned, when he is a worthy king. I am determined to renounce my kingdom. This is certain. I am at once setting off to the forest".

The ministers had to give their consent to the King's proposal because the King was determined to act thus and because that would prevent a disastrous war.

The King of Kashi with his heart overflowing with serenity and forgiveness set off to the forests accompanied by his family. The ministers approached the King of Koshal and requested him to take over the administration of the Kingdom of Kashi. They said " O King! We were ready to wage a war against you. But our King has extraordinary affection for his subjects. He is also the embodiment of wisdom. He did not like our innocent people being ruined by the war. Therefore, for the sake of the happiness of the people he has given up his Kingdom and is himself going away to the forests. He sent us to you to request you to accept the throne of Kashi. So you may freely occupy the throne of Kashi and rule over the Kingdom. We extend a hearty welcome to you as commanded by our King."

The king of Koshal was greatly stunned and astonished to hear this. He wondered whether all this could be true. He entertained this doubt. "Can this be true?" Since he had a vast army, with courage and confidence he entered the court of Kashi. When he came there, he found that the King of Kashi was not there. Later, the Ministers installed the king of Koshal on the throne; crowned him King of Kashi; and sang his glory.

The king of Koshal realised that the king of Kashi had really gone to the forests. Now, he experienced some peace of mind. He thought, "Now, the King of Kashi has been ruined; and people will not adore him any more". But even after he became the King, he found that people continued to admire the King of Kashi with greater zeal. In fact, their adoration was greater now. They said, "Look brother! How noble and benevolent the King of Kashi is! For the sake of the welfare of the people, he renounced his Kingdom, his treasury, his splendid power, pomp and paraphernalia; and he has gone away to the forests. Blessed is the King! Blessed is his sacrifice!" In this manner, people began to shower praises on the King of Kashi. How could the King of Koshal tolerate this? His heart began to burn with the flames of jealousy, "Ah! The green -eyed monster jealousy!"

Though man may have enough to eat and drink, though he may be living in luxury and opulence and affluence, though he may be enjoying honour and prestige in his life, on account of the tyrant jealousy, he keeps burning with envy at the sight of other's happiness, honour, prestige, affluence and glory. The agitation caused by jealousy is so tyrannical that the jealous man desires only the ruin of others who are enjoying honour, prestige and affluence. He takes delight in seeing the ruin of others, and is interested in hearing about it. If no such ruin overtakes others, he desires even their death. He thinks; "Why do not

they die? It will be good if they die". See how tyrannical jealousy is! If we ask a jealous man "Why are you jealous of them when they do not cause any harm to you?" he would say this, "of course, they have not caused any harm to me, but why do such unworthy fellows prosper? Why do such worthless fellows enjoy such honour and affluence?". This jeolousy brings no benefit to him; on the contrary on account of the agitation caused by jealousy, he commits a great sin and falls into spiritual ruin.

On account of the tyranny of jealousy, the king of Koshal thought, "The king of Kashi no doubt has given up his Kingdom and has gone away to forests, yet these foolish people keep praising him. It seems that they will stop praising him, only when he dies." What a wicked thought! Do you know the consequences of such wicked thoughts? This kind of thinking is called RAUDRA DHYAN (ignoble contemplation). And this kind of wicked contemplation goes on not for a few minutes; but it goes on incessantly throughout the day and night. Such a man binds such sins that take him to hell. Whenever one enterains such thoughts, he binds the karams of hell . What a terrible loss'! The Shastra says अट्टेण तिरियगई, रुद्दझाणेण गम्मए नरयं।

It means that man on account of Artadhyan (sorrowful contemplations) binds the sins worthy of the lives of animals,worms etc. and on account of RAUDRADHYAN (wicked contemplation) man binds the sins worthy of the birth in hell. What are the bitter fruits of such sins? One has to experience the terrible tortures of the hell called RAU-RAU-NARAK (the worst kind of hell). And he has to experience such dreadful tortures for countless years! He has to experience those tortures for millions of years. For the jealousy that lasts a short time in this birth, one has to experience later, terrible tortures like being cut, mutilated and other horrors for countless years!

All these consequences result from jealousy and from the desire of the death of others out of jealousy. The King of Koshal thought about the death of the King of Kashi; and he had no peace of mind. He proclaimed, "If any one cuts off the head of the King of Kashi and brings it to us, we shall give him a reward of one thousand gold coins."

What is the extent to which one keeps wishing that others should experience suffering! Is there any limit to this evil desire? Because the Jiva has not attained the Jin Shasan, it gives up forgiveness, amity, peace and self-restraint and remains steeped in the morass of hostility, animosity, hatred and jealousy. There is no wonder if a Jiva with a Mithyadrishti (false vision) behaves like this. In fact, such a Jiva deserves only pity being ignorant. But if a Jiva which has attained the Jin Shasan behaves thus, such a Jiva is not only innocent but foolish.

One lofty duty of the human heart is "forgiveness". It implies the duty not only of seeking the forgiveness of others but also of extending forgiveness to others . "Blessed are the merciful". Does this duty appear hard? No. There is no difficulty in it, and we should realize this truth, - "By my good fortune, I have attained the Jain Dharma; and from it I have received the precious message of 'forgiveness'. I have also got the opportunity of hearing about the tremendous forgiveness shown by Bhagwan Mahavir. Then why should I not practise this ideal of forgiveness?"

THE TREMENDOUS BENEVOLENCE OF THE KING OF KASHI:

The part of the story that took place after the king of Koshal announced his reward is greater than the earlier part of the story. A poor brahmin wanted to celebrate the marriage of his daughter; but he had no money at all. He

was absolutely poor. He was in great grief and despair. He was full of affliction and fear. Someone said to him, "Why do you worry? Approach the King of Kashi. He is very kind and benevolent. If you meet him and explain your difficulty to him, he will surely help you".

The brahmin felt a little encouraged; and he began to walk in the direction of Kashi with enthusiasm. He happened to pass through the very forest in which the former king of Kashi was dwelling in a cottage. The king asked the brahmin, "Noble man! Where are you going? Why are you so deeply worried? " The Brahmin replied, "Dear sir! I am going to meet the King of Kashi, who is renowned for his benevolence. I have to celebrate the marriage of my daughter. I am poor and penniless". Hearing this, the King thought. "This poor fellow is going to Kashi hoping to meet the erstwhile King of Kashi. But it is doubtful whether the present king of Kashi will help him or not. If he does not help this brahmin, he will return bitterly disappointed. And he will think that my fame that I am benevolent is false, Therefore, I must see that he gets some money, Why should I not render help to him?"

How could the king render any help to the brahmin? He had not brought any money with him when he came away to the forests.

Would you ask: "Had he not brought anything? Of course, he gave up his kingdom. But who could prevent him from bringing away with him gems, jewels and precious stones as well as gold coins from his treasure?"

Here is the answer to that question:

"He was a great man. The heart of a great man is always great. Only a man with a noble heart can understand him. How can low and petty minded people like

us understand the greatness of such a man's heart? That is why we ask such a mean question.

Question: Well! Then how could the king help the brahmin?"

You may put this question. But, just see! Already we have narrated the story of his extraordinary benevolence in giving up his kingdom for the sake of the welfare of his people. Now we will narrate the story of a greater benevolence which he rendered. You will know what it is if you hear the next part of the story.

The king of Kashi asked the Brahmin,"Do you know the King of Kashi? Have you seen him at any time? Do you think that you will achieve your objective, if you go there without knowing him?"

The brahmin said,"Dear sir ! I live in a village. How can I be familiar with such a great King?"

The king of Kashi said, "Dear friend ! I know him. I will accompany you to his court".

The brahmin felt greatly delighted. He said "Kindly accompany me sir! If you are with me, I am sure to succeed in getting help from him. And I shall be grateful to you for your help."

THE KING OF KASHI SACRIFICES HIMSELF:

The two set off to Kashi. Will the King of Kashi flatter the King of Koshal and beg for his favour? No, let us see what he actually does. He accompanied by the brahmin, entered the court of the King of Koshal and said; "Your excellency! You have announced a reward of one thousand gold coins to anyone who cuts off the head of the King of Kashi; and brings it to you. I am the King of Kashi. This brahmin has brought me to you. Kindly cut off my head and

take it; and give this poor brahmin the reward of one thousand gold coins. If you give him the amount, this poor man will be able to perform the marriage of his daughter. This brahmin came to me and sought my help, and I have come here from the forests. If you give him the amount, his objective will be fulfilled".

THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE KING OF KOSHAL

The king of Koshal had committed a monstrous action by occupying the throne of Kashi but could he continue to be monstrous even after witnessing this extraordinary greatness of the King of Kashi? No! He was stunned and astonished on hearing the words of the King of Kashi, and thought "This king gave up his Kingdom for the sake of the welfare of his subjects, and now in order to help a poor brahmin, he is prepared to give his head (life)! I am a human being; and he too is a human being. Impelled by selfishness and jealousy, I was obstinate in depriving him of his kingdom. I made him penniless and powerless and not satisfied with the ruin I caused him, I even desired his death. How mean I am compared to him who is so noble as to get ready to give up his life to help a poor man!!".

The King of Koshal, at once, stepped down from his throne and fell at the feet of the King of Kashi. The tears streamed down from his eyes. Sitting on his knees and folding his hands he said in a voice choked with emotion - "Splendid! Oh noble King! Splendid is your sacrifice. Oh King of Kashi! Magnificent is your munificence! Blessed is your sacrifice of your Kingdom for the welfare of your people! Blessed is your decision to sacrifice your life for the sake of a poor brahmin: I had lost my senses on account of the infatuating influence of the poison of jealousy. I caused dreadful calamities to you. I went to the extent of desiring to

cut off your head and to kill you. How mean and despicable I have been ! Oh! How sublime has been your bevaviour ! Enough oh king ! Kindly forgive me. By way of atoning for my misdeeds, I desire to crown you King of Kashi and Koshal. Be so gracious as to grant this entreaty of mine".

The eyes of the King of Kashi also welled up with tears when he heard this. He thought, "How sublime is our Aryan culture!" The king of Kashi ascended the throne of Kashi; and the King of Koshal became his subordinate King, of his own will. Thus the splendid sacrifice of the King of Kashi melted even the stone-heart of the King of Koshal and reformed it.

The prime duty of every human being of the Jain Shasan is forgiveness, Tolerance and Forbearance! and Self restraint.

WHY IS FORGIVENESS A SPECIAL VIRTUE FOR JAINS?

We have seen the bewildering forgiveness shown by the King of Kashi. When the lofty virtues of amity, self-restraint, benevolence and other such virtues are present in non-Jains, it is needless to say that they are absolutely essential in the case of Jains. ' खामेमि सव्व जीवे ' (I beg forgiveness from all Jivas). This is a principle that Jains should observe always. Especially, at the time of the Paryushan, it is the supreme duty of every Sadhu and Shravak "to seek forgiveness from others, and to extend forgiveness to others". Hence, it is said in the Shastra (Scripture) called Kalpasutra that he who forgives others is an adorer, a worshipper of the Dharma and one who does not forgive others is an abhorrer of Dharma. Shruta Kevali Bhagwan Bhadrabahu Swami has given this commandment. The Mahānishith Sutra also says, "If one does not possess the virtue of UPSHAM (tolerance), even crores of years of his penance will be futile and fruitless". Therefore, Jains should, as a duty, seek the forgiveness of

even their enemies; and should extend forgiveness even to their enemies. The story of Mrigavati and Chandanbala illustrates this very well.

MRIGAVATI ATTAINS KEVALJNAN BY MEANS OF FORGIVENESS:

Once it so happened, that when the Paramatma Mahavir Bhagvan completed his discourse, the Indras of the Jyotishkas, Surya (the sun) and Chandra (the moon) had arrived there by their original airship. Hence, though the day had ended, there was perfect brightness. Under the impression that the day had not yet ended, the Sadhvi Mrigavati sat near Shri Vir Prabhu spell-bound. When Surya and Chandra went away, there was sudden darkness. Mrigavati felt; "Oh! What is this? What a serious blunder have I committed in ignoring the passage of time!" She at once got up and hurried to her residence in confusion. She entered it. Her spiritual head, Sadhvi Chandanbala rebuked her for having come late, saying, "Oh you noble woman! It is not proper on the part of one of a noble family like you to stay out so long at night." Of course, the preceptress made this complaint, but said it in a soft and tender manner.

The hearts of those who have attained the Vitrag-shasan are so tender and lofty, that even their complaints or rebukes are expressions of compassion and tender affection and of the sweetness of love for the soul. Therefore, the words of such people are not mean or harsh; they are lofty, tender and pleasant.

Now, what happened in the mind of Mrigavati, after she heard this, is worth noting. We naturally wonder: "What an excellent age it was! How great were those spiritual heads! How excellent those disciples were!" Their values were lofty; each excelling the other. Mrigavati's agitation knew no bounds. She thought, "Oh! I have been the cause for my spiritual head's sorrow. I have caused great

anguish to the spiritual head who is the head of thousands of noble disciples. What a serious blunder have I committed!"

Thus, she experienced bitter repentance. She cursed herself for her carelessness and her sinful action. She was not at all angry with her preceptress; nor did she resent her objection to her action; otherwise, she would have said, "How could I know that the day had ended since there was the brightness of the original airship of Surya (the sun) and Chandra (the moon). I had not gone out to wander about. I had gone to Mahavir Bhagwan and suddenly I was caught in the darkness. What great sin have I committed that you should take such a serious exception to my action?" She did not try to free herself thus from the blame. She was a respectable lady. She possessed the lofty virtue of politeness; so she refrained from defending herself, and did not even entertain the thought of justifying her action. On the contrary, she began to blame herself again and again; and repeatedly begged for forgiveness from her spiritual head.

Of course, refraining from condemnation is one of the virtues of the life of a person who is pursuing the approach road to salvation; but according to that principle, one should not condemn or blame others; but one can surely condemn oneself for his own wrongs. Condemning others is a great sin, whereas self-censure is a lofty virtue. If one attains the pacification of one's own evil passions, one will surely attain spiritual elevation.

THE MIRACLE OF UPASHAMA OR PACIFICATION:

Upashama does not imply merely pacifying one's anger; it means the pacification of all our passions (Kashayas) like anger, pride, deception, ...attachments and hatred. Actually, it implies that one should pacify one's passions; and keep them at arm length. What is the result of such pacification? Mrigavati, who once committed a blunder, attained the sublime level called the <u>Kshapak</u>

Shreni. She rose through the 6th, 7th and the 8th Gunasthanaks (the stages of spiritual excellence); and attained the level of Shukladhyan (sublime contemplation): destroying her Karmas one by one. She rose through the ninth and tenth Gunasthanaks, there at the end completely destroying the Mohaniya Karma; and then ascending and passing the 12th Gunasthanak she destroyed totally Gnanavaran, Darshanavaran and Antaray Karmas; consequently at the beginning of the thirteenth Gunasthanak, she attained Kevaljnan and Kevaldarshan and became an Omniscient one. She did not carry out such penance or austerity; she did not have to face any such terrible impediments or disturbances; but merely by means of self-censure and pacification of passions, this Sadhvishree Mrigavatiji attained Kevaljnan ! Here self-censure means despising and discarding all vices and derogations in oneself. This is genuine spiritual realization.

The excellence of the Sadhvi Mrigavatiji was that though she was faulty and deserved censure, she rose to the firmament of omniscience. It is strange that the pupil began flying in the sky of Omniscience like a bird beating its golden wings joyously; whereas the preceptress, Chandanbala, though a treasure-house of virtues, is still remaining on the earth of a little knowledge; the state of a Chadmastha (embodied) being. This is the way of the Jain-Shasan. Now, we shall see how by these very virtues of forgiveness and pacification, the preceptress Chandanbala also attains Kevaljnan.

THE ELEVATION OF THE PRECEPTRESS BY THE FAULTY DISCIPLE!

Mrigavati, the Omniscient one, could now see everything clearly and directly, even in darkness. Meanwhile, Chandanbala, the preceptress after rebuking Mrigavati lay on her bed, drowsing. Her hand was out of her bed. A black cobra was moving towards her in the dark.

Mrigavati who was an Omniscient one, could see the crawling cobra. She stood up and took away the hand of the preceptress; and Chandanbala woke up from her sleep and said, "Why? What happened? Why did you lift my hand?"

You may wonder whether the preceptress could wake up thus, so soon? Yes! Sadhus and Sadhvis are always supposed to be vigilant. They do not fall into deep sleep. They sleep slightly for short durations. On being asked thus, Mrigavati said, "A cobra was crawling here, so I lifted your hand". Chandanbala was greatly shocked and astounded to hear this. She thought, "Ah! Amazing! How could she see a black cobra in this darkness?" She asked Mrigavati how she could see the cobra.

Mrigavati replied, "I saw it with the eyes of knowledge". "By what kind of knowledge? Did you see it (i) by means of the Pratipati knowledge, i.e. the knowledge that gets destroyed? or (ii) by means of the Apratipati knowledge i.e., the knowledge that can never be destroyed i.e., Kevaljnan?"

Her disciple said, "By means of the Apratipati knowledge". On hearing this, the preceptress realised that her disciple had become a Vitrag Sarvajna (one who has conquered all internal vices like attachments and hatred etc., and who has attained omniscience). She was greatly astounded to hear this. She exclaimed "What is this?" Now how could she remain quiet and calm? She began to shudder with a mysterious dread. She began to repent thinking, "I wonder when she attained Kevaljnan? It is likely that she attained Kevaljnan at the Samavasaran! If that is so, did I rebuke a Vitarag Omniscient? Alas! How foolishly I behaved! How stupid I have been! How ignorant I have been!" Though she was a preceptress, she sought the forgiveness of her disciple, she said to Mrigavati humbly, "Kindly pardon my blunder. Kindly forgive me. I caused great anguish to a Keval - Jnani. Kindly forgive me". Saying this, Chandanbala, the great Sadhvi began to ascend the

steps of the Gunasthanaks i.e., spiritual excellence through self-censure and the detestation of her own misdeed.

The detestation of one's own misdeeds is a lofty emotion; and a sublime kind of spiritual adoration. The King, who caused great anguish to Jhanjhariya Muni, attained the Anasakta Yog (detachment) by means of a detestation of his own misdeeds, and attained Kevaljnan. The new disciple of Chandarudracharya detested all his misdeeds of his various previous births, attained the Anasakta yog and then he attained Kevaljnan. In the same manner, the preceptress, Chandanbala also detested her misdeeds, proceeded further; reached the stages of Shukla-dhyan; Anasakti yog; Samatva yog (equanimity) and attained Keval Jnan.

Sadhvi Mrigavati, the worthy disciple of Mahattara-Sadhvi Chandanbala, the greatest and oldest of the 36,000 Sadhvis of Bhagwan Mahavir, became Omniscient and also became the cause of her preceptress also attaining omniscience.

A worthy disciple sometimes becomes the cause of his own or her own spiritual head's attainment of Omniscience. This is the speciality or excellence of the Jin-Shasan.

QUESTION:

Here, the preceptress and the disciple attained Kevaljnan; not by means of any austerity or by facing any disturbances or impediments from wicked people but by means of forgiveness, censure of their own misdeeds, and by means of repentance. What was the nature of their forgiveness and self-censure (the condemnation of their own misdeeds)? We too practise the virtue of forgiveness; we too censure our misdeeds and experience repentance, then why do we not attain Kevaljnan? Ah! Kevaljnan is far away. The thought worth doing is this, - At least why do we not attain even the higher Gunasthanaks? Then what

miracle lay in the quality of forgiveness, self -censure and repentance of these outstanding figures?

ANSWER:

The miracle lay in the fact that they knew the secret of the virtue of forgiveness and the condemnation of their own misdeeds. That was the reason why they rose higher and higher ; and attained Kevaljnan. The secret of forgiveness is that one should possess a soft, tender and loving heart. Some people may perform tapas (austerities); and may face impediments and disturbances and overcome them; but they may do all those things with a proud heart. How can such people become Vitarags? And how can they attain KevalJnan? The great Muni-Bahubali carried out the severe austerity of remaining in Kayotsarg (a standing posture for meditation) for a year! Yet he did not attain Kevalgnan! Why? The reason was that he had pride. He thought that if he went to Bhagavan Rishabhdev without attaining Kevalgnan, there he would have to salute his younger Kevalgnani brother-munis. If he attained Kevalgnan then if he went there he would not have to salute his younger brothers. So he stood there in Kayotsarga until he could attain Kevalgnan,virtually until he desired to go to them. His heart was proud so how could he attain Kevalgnan? Hence,twelve months later by the order of Bhagwan Rishabhdev there came two sadhvis (his sisters) Brahmi and Sundari and said to him,

वीरा मोरा ! गज थकी ऊतरो ।
गज चढचे केवल न होयरे ॥

That means: - "Oh, my dear brother! Dismount from the elephant. You cannot attain Kevaljnan so long as you are seated on the elephant". Then, Bahubali Muni who was sstanding in meditation with eyes closed, heard it and thought, "Ah! This is the voice of my sisters. What do they say? Am I seated on an elephant? I have taken the Deeksha; renouncing everything including elephants etc. I

am standing on the ground in the Kayotsarg posture. Why do these Sadhvis say so? They have taken great vows and are carrying them out. They would not utter a lie. Ah! Yes! I have realised their meaning. They mean; "You are seated on the elephant of egoism; and until you give up your pride, you cannot attain Kevaljnan. Get off the elephant of egoism. Discard your Kashaya of pride. Become a Vitarag discarding all your Kashayas. Only then can you attain Kevaljnan".

Then, Bahubali, at once, discarded his pride, and thought, "How foolish I have been! Did I refuse to salute my younger brothers who are superior to me a thousand-fold, and are omniscient (Anantjnanis)? I will go at once, and salute them. Why 360 times? I will salute them 3600 times". When Bahubali thus discarding his pride, put forth one step, he attained Kevaljnan.

THE EFFICACY OF FORGIVENESS:

The meaning is this. There may be pride in the heart of a person who carries out such austerities as Tyag (sacrifice) and Tap (austerities). But actually he should attain humility and tenderness of heart if he wishes to practise the virtue of forgiveness and if he wishes to pacify his passions. The miracle of forgiveness and of pacification is that it can bring about Kevaljnan. It was thus that the great sadhvis like Mrigavati and Chandanbala attained Kevaljnan. The meaning is that forgiveness arises only from a tender and soft heart;and the tenderness of heart results only from genuine repentance.

A tender heart and a genuine repentance and detestation of one's misdeeds are so efficacious that they can destroy millions of Karmas not only of this birth but of countless previous births (janmas) and burn away all Karmas heap after heap. The speciality lies in the fact that the one who practises forgiveness may be literate or illiterate; and may not be a Tyagi or Tapasvi (one who has made sacrifices and performed austerities), he may not

have also committed sins; yet if he with tenderness of heart releases the fire of repentance all Karmas burn away in their flames; and he attains Kevaljnan.

Why should we seek forgiveness even if we are not at fault?

QUESTION: When we have not committed any blunder or fault, and when the others are at fault, why should we seek their forgiveness?

ANSWER: Ah! When on account of us, others get angry or entertain any other evil sentiments, we should think that it is our fault. We must think, "How unfortunate I am! On account of me, he is agitated. How great should be my past births' sinfulness which makes me disagreeable and unpleasant to him". If you keep thinking thus, you will develop contempt for the meanness and ignobility of your own previous Janmas; you will detest your meanness and ignobility; and the result is that your heart will grow tender; and your Moha i.e., infatuation will grow weak. Thus though Mrigavati committed a negligible fault, she by tolerance pacified her passion and sentiments and attained Kevaljnan.

We have such examples. Though we have not committed any fault or blunder and; though others are at fault, if we forgive them we attain Kevaljnan. This truth is illustrated by the story of the young disciple of the aged Preceptor, Chandarudracharya.

Another illustration of the efficacy of forgiveness.

The New disciple of Chandarudracharya:

The new disciple of Chandarudracharya was rebuked by his spiritual head though he was faultless and innocent, and he attained Kevaljnan by means of self-restraint or pacification. This example of the new disciple of Chandarudracharya is worthy of deep consideration.

Once, it so happened that Chandarudracharya, a spiritual head was staying with his disciples in a rest-house in a garden outside a city. Since the Acharya was irritable and

short-tempered, he was staying in an interior room, of his own accord, so that by seeing some small mistakes of the disciples he might not be enraged. It was evening. Many young men who came into the garden for a walk requested the sadhus to give them the Deeksha. They made this request only by way of a joke, to make fun of the Sadhus. They made the request not seriously but in a flippant and jocular manner.

The Sadhus forbade their flippancy and frivolity. They prevailed upon them not to do so, but the youths continued to make their friovolous entreaties. At last,the Sadhus who felt agitated, sent them to the Acharya-Shri. The young men went in; and said to the Acharya; "Maharaj! Give us the Deeksha. Initiate us into the Charitra-dharma. We desire to become your disciples". They said so several times; but the Acharya said nothing. When they kept saying it repeatedly, the Acharya's anger showed itself. He asked them, "Who desires to receive the Deeksha?". Then one pushed forth a young man who was newly married and who still had on his wrist, the sacred marriage Kankan (Minaphal). The Acharya caught him between his knees; and pulled off his hair. The other boys seeing this ran away in fear. But that boy thought, - 'How can I now go home in this condition? If I go there, my friends will make fun of me "Oh! your hair has been pulled away, you are now a Sadhu". Thinking thus, he sought the Deeksha from the Acharya. The Acharya gave him the Deeksha and made him accept the vows like Samayik, and made him his disciple.

The new disciple had a family. He had been newly married. So,he said to the Acharya, "Revered Lord! Now, of course, I have been delivered from the Samsar. You have bestowed a great benefaction upon me, but if the members of my family come to know of this,they will come here; and will cause impediments to you. Therefore, kindly proceed, and we shall go on a Vihar (journey)".

THE STAGGERING DISCIPLE: AND THE BEATING PRECEPTOR.

The two set off towards a forest. Since it was dark whenever they had to cross ups and downs,heaps or hillocks, the preceptor tumbled and swerved; and even fell down. At such times, the disciple who possessed a strong body, took up his preceptor and carried him on his shoulders; yet because the disciple staggered on the way, the preceptor shook and hopped. Since this occurred again and again,the preceptor experienced discomfort and pain. He became very angry and with his fist,he boxed him on his head; and said, 'Oh you wicked fellow! How can I sit here comfortably? Unnecessarily I have fallen into this unhappy predicament'. The disciple sought his forgiveness; and walked on slowly but again when he staggered, the Preceptor's anger flared-up. He rebuked his disciple and hit upon his head with the stick, which was in his hand as a token of the Sadhu-dharma.

Could not the disciple, get angry with the preceptor and leave him on the ground? He could ; but what kind of disciple was he ? He was a disciple travelling through the life of charitra-dharma towards Moksha. He had taken the Deeksha just then; "When the Deeksha is taken for Moksha, one should not get angry whatever difficulties may come his way". He realized this truth.

He thought, "Ah! What a great agitation, my preceptor has been experiencing on account of me! The preceptor was sitting peacefully, and I have brought him to this condition by trying to make fun of him! How mean I am! Having received initiation into the charitra-dharma, I have caused him agitation instead of giving him joy and felicity. I am so ignorant that I cannot even see the right path! How heavy should be my Karmas of my previous births! What enormities I might have committed to gather such dreadful

Karmas and bind upon my wicked soul!" What ensued? He did not at all become angry. He did not entertain any thoughts of dislike or hatred. He was full of the spirit of tolerance and forgiveness.

THE FORGIVING DISCIPLE ATTAINS KEVALJNAN.

Thus the disciple of Chandarudracharya displayed heartfelt forgiveness; rose to the steps of Shukladhyan ; destroyed the four Ghati (serious) Karmas ; and attained Kevaljnan.

QUESTION : The disciple had received the Deeksha just then. We are not sure whether he was carrying out any austerities at home formerly. Yet in that short period how could he reach higher levels of contemplation and how could he attain Kevaljnan? Is Kevaljnan so cheap - so easy of attainment ?

ANSWER : Yes, one can attain Kevaljnan easily by means of tolerance, forgiveness and the pacification of sensual passions and the mental sentiments of anger, pride etc..and self-censure.

One should think like this :-

"I am a human being ; not an animal ", one should realize this. Wicked passions and sentiments like anger etc.. are proper to animals ; but those passions and sentiments are unbecoming of human beings who have attained the lofty human birth. "Because I am a human being ; I should not entertain evil passions." If we remember this, our anger subsides ; and we can easily entertain lofty feelings like tolerance and forgiveness.

This must be a life-long sutra.

"I am a man ; not an animal, and as a human being I should not entertain evil passions".

In this connection, the example of the wife of Champakabhai Bhansali of Calcutta is worth consideration.

CHAMPAKBHAI BHANSALI - THE GREAT SHRAVAK :

Champakbhai came to Ahmedabad from Calcutta ; and settled down there. He was operated upon for hernia. A month later, he went to Patan from Ahmedabad to carry out the Paryushan festival. There, with great spiritual awareness every day, he performed salutations to about 50 sadhus by standing up and falling at the feet of every sadhu. He also carried out daily spiritual austerities with the same spiritual awareness. On account of all this, the stitches put in the course of his operation, might have given way. At the end of the annual pratikraman (atonement), he began to experience severe pain in his stomach. The doctors did not guess the cause for this development. They delayed treatment thinking that on account of the gas formed through fasting the pain might have appeared. If the cause was found out ; and if he was at once treated in a hospital with a prompt operation in time, probably he would have escaped the danger.

THE SUDDEN END ; AND A LOFTY SPIRITUAL STATE :

He was lying on his death-bed, so he invited the revered Acharya Shri Vijay Ramachandra Sooriji Maharaj and heard the Mangalik (a prayer) and the Samadhivachan, (the words of spiritual solace). The Acharya asked, "How is Champakbhai ?" He replied, "Maharaj Sahib! when I have been fortunate enough to obtain Arihantdev and a great spiritual head-like you, and

the Jain Dharma, what do I lack? I am not at all worried about anything". His friend Surchandbhai said, "Dear Champakbhai! Do you like to make me say anything to your son, Jayesh and to your wife ?" Then that great Shravak said, " I have given up all worldly connections, I have renounced everything . I do not bear any relationship with any inanimate or conscious object . I have nothing to say to anyone.".

WHAT A LOFTY SPIRITUAL STATE OF RENUNCIATION!

It is to be remembered that Champakbhai was not an ordinary person. He had a large business in Madras and Bombay. He had also an office in Calcutta ; and was running business enterprises in several other places. He had one son and three daughters. He was a man of outstanding affluence and status. When a man with such a large business, affluence and such a flowering and happy family renounces all the samsarik relations, we are naturally amazed at the lofty level of his perfection in the Jain Dharma and at his knowledge of the Jain doctrines. That was why he said to me (the Revered Acharya Shri Bhuvanbhanu Soorishwarji Maharaj) before the commencement of the Chaturmas, "Maharaj Sahib! Kindly carry out this Chaturmas in Ahmedabad. After the Chaturmas, I want to get my son the Deeksha in a grand manner. I will spend five lakhs of rupees for the festival."

The Dharmapatni's (The noble wife's) Dharmasutra (Religious Principle)

" We are Jains ".

Even that great Shravak who possessed a high level of spiritual excellence, passed away, after his Ayushyakarma ended on the fifth day of the bright fortnight

of Bhadrapad. His dead body was taken to Ahmedabad by a car. It was night and a few thousands of people had gathered to see his dead body and to pay their last homage and respects to him. His son and daughter were weeping bitterly. Then their mother, Hansabehn tried to console them thus " Look here! We are Jains. We should not weep thus". This is a sublime utterance tantamount to a sacred Mantra.

A similar statement which has the quality of a mantra is this, "I am a human being, not an animal. As a human being I should not entertain wicked thoughts and feelings like an animal". This lofty contemplation helps us to display the qualities of tolerance and forgiveness.

The family of Champakbhai was so pious and religious that the members of the family took care to see that the fuel used for the funeral pyre did not contain any small worms. Because it was the time of monsoon ; some minute beings could be present in logs of wood ; and they wanted to see that no living being was burnt in the funeral pyre. Hence Jayeshbhai had arranged it through his friend formerly sent there. Moreover, it was announced in the crematorium that Champakbhai's Sadadi (mourning) would not be carried out and a special worship had been arranged in the temple ; and that all should please gather there".

WHAT HAPPENED TO CHANDRUDRACHARYA'S DISCIPLE ?

The matter is this. The disciple of Chandarudracharya continued to walk through the forest carrying his preceptor on his shoulder, but when he had to cross ups and downs, he shook. Hence though he was not at fault, his guru knocked him on his head with a stick, with raging anger. Even then, the disciple did not get angry with his preceptor but he

remained tolerant and forgave him. He pacified his own passions and evil sentiments and remained serene. It is likely that he was reciting this Mantra " I am a Sadhu, not a householder, I should not at all get angry". Even if we have to face a calamity, we should forgive those who have caused such calamities ; and the key to that forgiveness is ; " I am a human being, I am not an animal. I should not give way to anger like an animal."

TOLERANCE OR FORGIVENESS IS A GREAT ATTAINMENT :

Man is capable of forgiveness. This is a great boon to him because he has human brain and with forgiveness it can bring felicity and prosperity to his soul. Otherwise, such evil passions and sentiments as anger and pride etc. would cause distress and ruin to his own soul. On account of our anger, our life becomes low and despicable and not noble. On account of our anger we lose our status and prestige in our family, among our friends, and in our society. Our honour declines. Anger harms our relations with others and sometimes owing to anger we may also commit severe misdeeds and face some serious calamities. On the other hand, if we possess the qualities of tolerance, forgiveness, serenity and cheerfulness, they will make us and our nature agreeable and pleasant to all. Our fame increases and we can escape from many calamities. There is the example of Achunkari Bhatta described in the shastras.

ACHUNKARI BHATTA

Achunkari Bhatta was the only daughter of a Seth who had eight children. She was greatly loved by her father. Her actual name was different from this. Her father out of his fondness for her had given strict instructions to his people

not to make even the slightest complaint against her. Chunkar means making complaints. Achunkar means not making complaints. So, people used to call her Achunkari Bhatta. On account of this reason, Bhatta was very haughty and irritable, and she used to quarrel with everyone ; and to treat everyone with contempt. Her father was wealthy ; therefore, no one dared to make any complaint against her. If anyone tried to say anything against her, her father used to scold him. "My daughter is very naive and artless. She would not create such a storm. You people are worrying her". Hearing it, the girl used to grow haughtier.

Excessive fondness is very harmful. It encourages many evil qualities in children. Therefore, it is said:

पंचवर्षाणि लालयेत् । दशवर्षाणि ताडयेत् ॥
प्राप्ते तु षोडशे वर्षे पुत्रं मित्रवदाचरेत् ॥

It means : "When your son or daughter is a child of five years, fondle it ; when the child is from six to fifteen beat it ; and when he or she reaches the age of sixteen treat him or her as your friend". It is said that we should not beat children of five years because they being senseless beating does not reform them and they may become obstinate. They should be made to follow the right path only by means of love and affection. If we beat such children, they will not attain physical and mental development also. If such children are treated with love they will obey their parents.

From the age of six upto the age of fifteen, children have to be set right and brought up by means of training and necessary beating. Here bringing up means securing their safety. In order to secure their safety and welfare we have to use such methods as Sam (entreaty) Dam (giving gifts) and Dand (beating). At this stage, we should sometimes guide them and instruct them with love and affection ; and sometimes, if a necessity arises, we should

also beat them and punish them, so that they may not repeat their mistakes fearing punishment. If at such times, we fondle them and show them love and affection instead of punishing them, they will not change their faulty ways and may even grow worse.

The same thing happened in the case of Achunkari Bhatta. She continued to grow worse, and pride, arrogance, anger and improper behaviour increased in her. The result of all this was that after she reached the age of marriage, though she was very beautiful, no young man came forward to marry her, because she was a shrew. Her father tried to find a bridegroom for her. But his efforts were in vain. Her father was prepared even to pay two lakhs of rupees to the bridegroom. Yet no young man came forward to marry her. The only reason for this was that her father had put forth a strict condition that anyone who desired to marry his daughter, should not after marrying her, oppose her wishes, should not make any complaints against her, should not rebuke her and say to her "Be silent !" and should act according to her wishes. Who would agree to this condition, though he might get two lakhs of rupees?

THE CHEIF MINISTER AGREES TO MARRY HER :

In his city he found no one who was willing to marry his daughter, and it was known everywhere that she had been rejected by everyone. He became completely fed up with the matter and he sent information to the Chief Minister in the court of a King, in a city nearby. The Chief Minister was a man of incisive intelligence. But how could he accept that condition? His friends encouraged him saying "Oh! you are very intelligent. Why don't you show your intelligence in this matter?"

The Chief Minister thought, "All right, let me give my consent to this marriage. What can that girl demand? I will

provide more amenities than she demands and she will have no reason to complain at all". The Chief Minister gave his consent to the marriage. Achunkari Bhatta became his wife.

The Chief Minister had provided a large number of attendants, servants and countless amenities and luxuries so that Achunkari would have no reason to make any complaint. But one day the Chief Minister returned home late and she at once complained, "Why have you come late today?" The Chief Minister at once sought her forgiveness and said, "I am sorry, I have made a mistake, Kindly pardon me".

She said haughtily and angrily, "You say you have made a mistake, do you? Well, from today onwards you must return home before 6 p.m."

The Chief Minister thought that since the King's court ended its activities at 5 p.m. there would be no difficulty in his returning home before six. So he said " O yes, I will surely return home before six. You need not have any doubt regarding this".

The life of the Chief Minister and his wife was running smoothly but his friends began to feel jealous of him. They grew jealous thinking of the smooth manner in which the Chief Minister's life was going on. So, out of jealousy, one day they said to the king, "Your Excellency! Your Chief Minister respects his wife's orders more than your orders".

The King asked them, "How is it?" The friends of the Chief Minister had found out that his wife had ordered him to return home before six in the evening, Therefore, they said to the King, "To-day you must allow the Chief Minister to go home only after 6 p.m. The King agreed to this suggestion and in the evening when it was 5 O'clock the Chief Minister

said to the King, "I salute you my dear King! I wish to take leave of you for today".

The King said, "Please stay here for some more time today. There is some urgent work to be done".

The Chief Minister knew very well that if he returned home late there would be a cyclone in his house, but what could he do? He could not tell the King about his domestic problem. He sat down with the hope that the King would tell him about the urgent work and that he would be able to finish it at once and return home in time. But, upto 6 O'clock the king was engaged in other activities ; and said nothing to him. After 6 O'clock the King said, "It is now too late, we shall talk about it tomorrow. You can go now".

ANGER OVER A TRIFLE

The Chief Minister said, "All right. Your Excellency!" and set off towards home. But he thought, "Today a serious blunder has been committed by me. But how could I tell the king about it ?" When he actually returned home he found the door bolted and barred from inside. He knocked loudly on the door and said, "Darling! kindly open the door".

His wife said from inside, "No, I will not open the door. Why have you come late?"

The Chief Minister said to his wife, "Dear one! today the King detained me in the Court since there was some urgent work to be done".

Achunkari Bhatta said, "So, our words have no value?"

The Chief Minister replied humbly "Dearest! I attach the highest value to your words. I have committed a great blunder. Kindly pardon me. Tomorrow onwards I will be home in time".

She said haughtily "Do you say you have committed a blunder? I tell you such things cannot go on in this house".

Now even the Chief Minister became terribly angry. He said instinctively"Damn it! What are you saying? Whose house is this? Is it your house or mine?"

How could Achunkari who was arrogant tolerate this? At once, she opened the door and said, "Come in. It's your house; not mine. I do not like to live in the house of a stranger. I am going away to my father's house". Saying this, she got ready to leave. The Chief Minister trying to prevent her from going said, "It is night. It is not safe to go out alone. Please get in".

Achunkari shouted "Let me go!" and releasing her hand from his grasp, set out.

The Chief Minister thought, "How can she go anywhere alone in this night? She will go just now some distance, but then she will return home". Thinking thus, he sat in his house expecting her return.

Now, you see what a great calamity Achunkari faces on account of her rudeness and impertinence. Anger is harmful because it makes one blind to everything. One who is physically blind is better because he cannot see existent things; but one who is blinded by anger sees things which are not existent; and lured by them he is deceived. The same thing happened in the case of Achunkari also. She could not find safety in the forest area where she was walking and it was not easy for her to reach her father's

house safely. Though she knew that it was not safe to travel alone in that area ; she proceeded towards her father's town hoping to find honour in her father's house. She, at that time, happened to be walking in the forest, four robbers came there unexpectedly. They saw her going alone, and found that she wore costly ornaments and jewels. They shouted "Eh! who are you? Stand up there!"

Achunkari, in accordance with her nature said angrily "Get away you fellows! Who are you to ask me to be standing?" The robbers went near her and said "Take off all your jewels and give them to us".

Achunkari slapped the robber who said this and shouted "You rascal! Who are you to say all this?" Then the four joined together and beat her severely, and then covering her face with a mask took off all her jewels. Then they thought "Of course she is a young woman of great beauty but it is highly hazardous to keep with us this lady who is haughty and arrogant by temperament ; so let us sell her away and get some money". Thinking thus they took her to the Kingdom of Lauhal where the business of human blood was prevalent and sold her away at the market.

That country was inhabited by violent and heartless people. They were taking out the blood of people whom they had bought.

Please think about this. What could Achunkari get in such a country? What did she get in the forest? Why did she face that calamity? Was it not on account of her arrogance and anger? When that was so, how could she get peace or pacification in such a calamitous predicament, and at the last moment?

HOW SHOULD ONE 'S LAST MOMENTS BE?

Human beings do not generally realise how they should face their last moments! At that time should they be angry and agitated? Or should they be peaceful and serene? How could they experience peace and serenity in the last moments of this life if throughout their life they have been full of anger, hatred and agitation? Normally, a person remembers in the last moments what he has very much practised during his life. He or she has such a kind of temperament as the kind of life he or she has led. If throughout his life a man has been a glutton and if his life-long habit has been to eat limitlessly, how can such a man entertain the thought of carrying out austerities like fasting in his last moments? Normally even this is the rule regarding human life "As is the nature of a man (his emotions and thoughts) so will be his next birth". "As are the feelings in his life, likewise would be life in the next birth". That is why those who eat food with delight in the night take birth as cats and owls. Is it not said in the hymns relating 'Barahvrat Puja' (i.e. twelve vows of a householder).

"तिहां रात्रिभोजन करतां थका रे लो,
मांजार-घुवड अवतार जो"

Why? It is so because, only in such births jivas can enjoy eating food in the night. Even in this birth, human beings are impelled to entertain impure and ignoble thoughts and feelings on account of eating food in the night. When that is so what should we say of the next birth? They have to experience the evil consequences of eating food in the night in this janma. Similarly men have to experience many agonies even in this janma on account of their anger and pride. .... The Mighty Emperor Ravan blinded by arrogance lost his position and prestige; lost his splendid sway over three vast continents and he had to face the

greatest calamity namely disgraceful death when his own Chakra cut off his head. In other words, on account of his overbearing nature and arrogance he lost his life.

Agnisharma, who had attained extraordinary spiritual excellence had to fall into the endless mazes of the Samsar on account of his animosity against the soul of Samaraditya Kevali Bhagwan, through various janmas; and had to keep wandering in the Samsar endlessly.

ACHUNKARI
HOW WAS THE HAUGHTY ACHUNKARI'S BLOOD TAKEN OUT?

Now you see what happened further about Achunkari Bhatta and how she had to experience terrible torture. The man who had bought her took her home and tied her to a pillar with a rope; he also bound with a rope her hands and feet so that she might not make any movement. He gagged her mouth so that she might not scream with pain or fear and tied a bandage over her eyes so that she might not see anything that was happening. Later he pierced the fleshy and muscular portions of her body with a large thick needle and collected her blood in a vessel. As long as blood kept surging out of the holes made by the needle, he kept collecting her blood. Afterwards just as when the juice stops surging from a mango, we press it with our hands and force out the juice remaining in the fruit, he pressed her body and kept forcing blood out of the holes on her body. The poor woman Achunkari being bound hand and foot was unable even to move a little or to breathe a little to rid herself of the terrible torture. Since her mouth was gagged she could not scream or cry. Since her eyes were covered with a bandage she could not see what was going on. So she began to experience terrible horror fearing that her body would be again pierced with a needle.

What a terrible torture Achunkari had to experience on account of her arrogance and overbearing nature ! Her tortures did not end there. They continued day by day, thus for eight days ! Then poor Achunkari's body became empty of blood like the skin of a mango whose juice has been completely pressed out; and then he stopped piercing her body with the needle. Then all the wounds on her body were dressed with ointment and bandage. She was given the cream of milk, coca, fruits and other tasty and nourishing food.

Now think of this. Did she like to eat those things? Not at all; because if she ate them she would grow strong and healthy and she would have to experience again the tortures of being pierced with a thick needle, but she could not refuse to eat food since she felt extremely hungry. Her difficulty was this. She could not remain hungry; and if she ate food, she would have to face the tortures of being bled.

WHERE DID THE TASTE OF FRUITS AND SWEETS DISAPPEAR?

How could she eat such nutritious food? Could she enjoy the delicious taste of fruits, sweets and coa? No. This is what exactly the enlightened ones say. "If we, while enjoying sensual delights with women and wealth which are like fruits and sweets of life, realize the tortures of hell, we will not be able to enjoy them".

After a week or two of consuming nourishing food, Achunkari became stout and robust again. Then she had to experience the terrible torture of being pierced through her soft and tender skin, with a thick needle and blood being squeezed. Could she scream with pain? No. How could she scream since her mouth was gagged? When she was thus tortured, the tears streamed down from her eyes; but who was there to comfort her and to wipe her tears?

ACHUNKARI'S REPENTANCE:

When Achunkari had to experience that torture every alternative week, she thought, "Why does not Death take me away? O God! I cannot bear with this torture. Free me from this harrowing distress and anguish. My father spoilt me by his excessive fondness for me. His fondness and indulgence made me haughty and overbearing. If I am delivered from this place of torture, I will never get angry with anyone under any circumstances and I will never behave arrogantly though I may have to face the worst kind of disgrace or provocation. Fie upon me! Fie upon my arrogance and overbearing nature the bitter fruits of which I have had to experience in this Janma itself".

You see; The jiva does not think of the evil fruits of sinful actions while committing them; and so the jiva does not hesitate to commit any sins; On the other hand, one experiences delight at the time of committing sins! But when one has to experience the bitter fruits of one's own evil actions, one cannot bear with them. Bearing this truth in mind, we should not at all commit any sinful actions. Otherwise as it happened in Rukmini's past and present lives, a drum from a drop is worth remembering.

16 GHADIS BECOME 16 YEARS IN RUKMINI'S LIFE;

"Why have I been subjected to the anguish of being separated from my son for sixteen years?"--This question of Rukmini, the Queen-consort of Lord Krishna Vasudeva, has been answered thus by Bhagwan Neminath. "In your previous birth, once out of curiosity, you took up the eggs of a pea-hen, with your hands covered with Kumkum (a red powder) and then you again placed them there. The eggs looked red because they were smeared with Kumkum. Because the eggs looked red, the pea-hen could not

recognize them and it began to lament over the disappearance of the eggs. Sixteen ghadis (a ghadi is a period of 24 minutes) later, since heavy rain fell, the Kumkum was washed away and the eggs looked white. The pea-hen felt happy to find its eggs. You committed the sin of causing that separation for 16 ghadis. That was the cause for the separation between you and your son, Pradyumna for 16 years, and on account of that sinful Karma of your previous life you had to experience the anguish of separation for 16 years",the Lord said:

सोल घडीना वर्ष सोल थया जी ।
हसतां ते बांध्या कर्म रोतां न छूटे प्राणिया जी ।

The meaning is this. "A jiva may commit a sin for fun; and later even if one weeps over it, the karma does not disappear until its bitter fruits are experienced". You took up the eggs for joy because they looked fascinating, and this action of yours caused 16 ghadis of separation between the pea-hen and its eggs; and for having caused 16 ghadis of separation, you had to experience 16 years of separation from your son. "While committing a sin for fun or for joy, one should think of the painful consequences of such a Karma".

GOOD FORTUNE APPEARS IN ACHUNKARI'S LIFE:

See what a terrible anguish Achunkari Bhatta had to experience on account of her anger and arrogance. But now good fortune appeared in her life. By chance, her maternal uncle happened to go to that area; he bought her back from that cruel man, and brought her to her father's house. On hearing the story of her tortures and anguish, all wept bitterly; and her father said "This is my own blunder. I am to blame myself for all this. Instead of inculcating in you such lofty virtues as forgiveness, peace and amity, I

encouraged you to become proud, overbearing and irritable, and I pushed you into this pit of anguish". As he said this, he wept bitterly.

Achunkari also said weeping: "Dear father'! kindly do not weep. You are not to blame for my misfortune. The fault lies with my sinful Karmas of my previous birth, and it is the consequence of my pride, anger and my contemptuous treatment of others. From this tragic incident I have learnt the virtues of amity, forgiveness, tolerance and peace; and I feel that this is a great benefaction bestowed upon me by the Parmatma; and I have decided not to entertain henceforth in my life, such evil passions as anger, arrogance and haughtiness. Since I have discarded my evil passions, my soul has begun to rise towards perfection."

Then the Seth sent a message to the Chief Minister: "We have found our daughter, Achunkari. She has returned home. So, we request you to take her to your house".

The Chief Minister refuses ...
But

What did the Chief Minister say?
Remembering Achunkari's past behavior, he thought "How can I take that devil back into my house?" Thinking thus, he sent this reply, "I did not send her to your house; hence you need not send her to my house. She has returned to your house on her own accord; hence, you may keep her there."

The Seth thought,-

"I think that the Chief Minister is under the impression that Achunkari is still haughty and irritable. That is why he does not like to receive her. I will take her personally to him; and I will explain to him all the tragic events that took place; and

that will melt his heart; and he will surely receive her back into his house".

Thinking thus, the Seth took his daughter to the Minister. He narrated the entire story to him. When he came to know the tortures of being pierced with thick needles and squeezed that Achunkari had experienced in the Kingdom of Lauhal, he was filled with great grief; and began to weep. He thought that she had to experience those tortures because he had allowed to her go out alone, and that it was all his fault. He held her hands; and begged for her forgiveness. She stopped him and said:

"Kindly forgive me. I went away haughtily though I knew that it was not right. You bore with all my rudeness and arrogance patiently. You are, indeed, a great man. I behaved like a monster, and in consequence, I suffered hellish tortures. But whatever happened was for my own good. If that tragedy had not occurred, I would not have discarded my anger and arrogance, and there would have been no reformation in my life. Not only this, if I had continued to be arrogant and irritable, I should have courted the disaster of wandering endlessly in the mazes of the samsar, taking many countless low and despicable janmas, in the 84 lakh yonis of Samsar (84 lakh forms) - God knows! It was good that I went alone into the terrible country; and suffered hellish tortures as a consequence of my extreme sins of arrogance and haughtiness. Now, I have learnt a good lesson. I have vowed not to get angry and to retain peace, amity and forgiveness even if I have to face impediments caused by super naturual agencies."

The Chief Minister received her back into his house with overflowing love. Later, Achunkari remained serene, humble and cheerful under all circumstances. She managed her domestic affairs with amity and serenity.

Once, Devendra, the King of deities, happened to praise her in his Court. One deity did not agree with him; and came down to earth to test her. Now you see how she succeeded in facing the test that the divine being contrived and how, at the end, the divine being blessed her for her forgiveness.

A DEITY TESTS ACHUNKARI.

Achunkari Bhatta, began leading a life of amity, humility and felicity in her husband's house. She began living in accordance with the principles of Dharma. She was spending her days in such sublime activities as rendering service and devotion to Sadhus and Sadhvis. Profoundly impressed with her piety and devotion, the great deity Indra once praised her tolerance and forgiveness in his Court. One deity could not bear with this praise bestowed on Achunkari. Therefore, he desired to test Achunkari. He thought "Achunkari has suffered terrible tortures in Lauhal. She has been pierced with large needles and her blood has been squeezed from her. When she has suffered such tortures, she would not care for impediments in domestic matters. If I caused impediments in her domestic matters to her, she would not lose her patience and tolerance. She would patiently bear with them thinking that they are the bitter fruits of her Karmas. If I cause impediments to her spiritual activities and austerities, she might get angry and lose her temper and tolerance. Then I can tell Indra "Look at the anger of your Achunkari whom you praised so greatly."

Thinking thus, the deity assumed the form of two Sadhus and arrived at Achunkari's house. One Sadhu said to her: " We need the Lakshapak oil for a sick Sadhu. We have heard you have got it. Can we get it here?"

Achunkari was greatly happy to hear this; and she said, "I am indeed blessed, Oh Revered one! Your holy feet

have hallowed my house. I am really fortunate because I can now give this *supatradan* i.e. alms to a worthy person". At once, she said to her lady attendant: "Bring that bottle of Lakshapak oil from my almirah". Why did she not go personally to fetch it? She thought that if she went in, the Sadhu might go away. So, she remained there, standing near the Sadhu.

But when the lady attendant took out the bottle from the almirah, the deity in an invisible manner pushed her hand with his hand. The bottle fell on the ground and broke into pieces. The precious oil was spilt on the ground. The lady attendant, terror-striken, thought: "Ah! What a great calamity has happened! The precious oil has been spilt on the ground. I fear what the mistress of the house will say. She will be very angry with me, and will hurl abuses at me. She will surely punish me severely".

But the amazing thing was that Achunkari did not at all get angry. She did not rebuke her; and she did not entertain even the least feeling of hatred in her heart. Since she had vowed not to get angry, she remained serene though she saw the broken glass bottle and spilt oil, and said calmly: "Dear sister! Do not worry. You need not fear anything. It does not matter if the bottle is broken. There is another bottle in the almirah. Take it out carefully, and bring it carefully here. The Maharaj Sahib has to go urgently, and render service to the sick sadhu". Hearing this, the attendant felt greatly relieved; but the deity was greatly overwhelmed and astonished. He thought "How astounding is her patience! How full of forgiveness she is ! A bottle of precious oil has been lost; and her spiritual service has been hampered; yet she has not got angry. Let me see what will be there in the other bottle." When the attendant took out the other bottle, the invisible deity's hand pushed her hand and it too fell down and broke into pieces! The precious oil fell on the ground.

Now, the lady attendant was beside her wits with fear and she began to weep, "Oh God! What have I done? Alas! what a terrible blunder have I committed !" Saying this, she slapped on her cheeks and again lifted her hands to slap herself in the face. At once, Achunkari hurried to her; and held her hands, and said in a serene and loving manner, "Sister! What are you doing? If the bottles are broken, no great loss has occurred. Why do you weep? We have to give alms to the worthy Sadhu and don't worry. Even now we have one more bottle and we shall give it to him. So, do not be afflicted. Bring the other bottle carefully." Then she went near the Sadhu and said with folded palms, "Revered Maharaj! There has been a little delay., Kindly pardon me. We, householders, commit such mistakes normally. Kindly forgive me for the delay. My lady attendant will bring the bottle in a moment. Kindly wait a little."

The deity was profoundly impressed with her loving and forgiving attitude towards her attendant; and her humble and respectful attitude towards him. He was greatly astonished at her forgiveness and patience.

The jivas are so full of curiosity that they do not feel satisfied with what they have seen, known and experienced. How many things they might have experienced till now in their countless births in this world? Yet they are not satisfied. They would have heard the words relating to other human beings countless times yet they have the curiosity to hear more. It is a matter of regret that they do not take delight or interest in the words of scriptures and in matters relating to Spirituality and Dharma, though the human birth is the fittest for such sublime pursuits.

The human birth is the fittest time when the jivas can take interest in the soul, the Paramatma and 'Dharma; as well as for refraining from comitting sinful actions. If the Jivas,

in their human birth do not pursue those noble objectives; and if they commit sins, then this human birth will be a curse, not a boon.

The deity was fortunate since he had found in Achunkari a worthy soul: Even after all this, his curiosity continued and he tried to test her further and the test did not bring any untoward result. When the lady attendant went to fetch the third bottle, Achunkari said "Look sister! Now we have only one bottle of that oil and we have to render service to the noble Sadhu Maharaj giving it to him. This gift given to the worthy Sadhu brings us spiritual prosperity which will make our life fruitful. Therefore, bring the bottle with great care and caution". The lady attendant did as she was bidden, but when she tried to place the third bottle in the hands of Achunkari, even before she could place it in her hands the invisible deity threw down the bottle from her hand.

Now imagine what the predicament of the lady attendant was! She cried aloud saying "O! What have I done?" and then she began to beat her forehead and breast with her hands violently. Even now, Achunkari did not get enraged. Holding the hands of the lady attendant she said in a polite and tender manner, "Sister! What are you doing? Don't take this negligible matter seriously. You have broken only three bottles but I have broken ten such bottles. If bottles are broken, why should we break our hearts? Our hearts are not harmed by the breaking of bottles. When that is so, why should you weep? This valuable human birth should not be wasted in such useless weeping. If we should weep at all we should weep over our sinful actions so that we may refrain from such sinful actions. Ah! Today there have been impediments which prevented us from rendering service to a worthy Sadhu. Yet we do not lose anything if we have in our hearts a genuine desire to render such service by charity. Therefore, do not grieve over what has happened".

After saying this to her lady attendant Achunkari folded her palms humbly and turned towards the Sadhu and said "Revered Sir! Today I have not been so fortunate as to give you the oil you desired. But such oil is being prepared here. Kindly come two days later and bestow upon us the benefaction of receiving the oil from us. This is my heartfelt entreaty to you."

The deity was greatly amazed at Achunkari's patience, forgiveness and serenity. She had not given way in the least to anger or agitation, though her endeavour to carry out a spiritual duty had been impeded. She had the genuine desire of giving the alms. She had the opportunity of giving alms to the Sadhu. The desired thing also was there with her; yet she could not render that deed of charity. Why? Apparently, on account of the carelessness of an attendant. Even then she did not get angry with the attendant. This was really marvellous and amazing. What an extraordinary self-restraint ! How firm was her spirit of forgiveness ! How firmly was she determined to retain her spirit of tolerance, even under trying circumstances! Even if Brahma himself had tried to shake her determination he would have failed.

The deity thought, "I thought that if I impeded her spiritual austerities she would lose her spirit of patience and forgiveness. I committed a great blunder in thinking so. I could not realise that she is so great. Now the test is over. She has been successful in the tests and if I try to test her further it will be a futile endeavour. Let me seek her forgiveness. I should beg for her forgiveness and then I should go straight to heaven and declare there in Indra's court that he was absolutely right in bestowing that praise upon her".

Thinking thus, the deity assumed his original divine form; restored the bottles of oil to her and then saluting her

humbly, he said "Noble lady! I caused great anguish to you. Kindly pardon me. I am a divine being. Indra praised your spirit of forgiveness in his court. I could not bear with the praise that he bestowed upon you. So I came here to test you. But I am greatly delighted to find that you are the very embodiment of patience, firmness and fortitude. I have not been able to defeat you or to shake your spirit of forgiveness. I caused you unnecessary anguish and so I beg for your forgiveness. I am immensely delighted with your tremendous spirit of forgiveness. You may ask for any boon from me. Kindly mention what you desire".

Achunkari said, " I do not need anything. I am happy to find that I have attained mastery over the spirit of forgiveness, because I have succeeded in this test. What should a human being desire which can be greater than the spirit of forgiveness? I do not desire anything else. I deem you my benefactor because you have given me the opportunity of strengthening my spirit of forgiveness". The deity was immensely impressed and pleased with her. He went straight to heaven and narrated the entire story in the court of Devendra. He heartily admired Achunkari's forgiveness which was stronger than the supernaturual powers of a divine being. All the divine beings heard this, admired Achunkari's spirit of forgiveness and expressed their approval of her action in that situation.

"BLESSED IS FORGIVENESS! BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS!

We have attained the most valuable birth. Remember that only in this valuable human birth can we attain forgiveness, tolerance, serenity and amity for all jivas. Our prayer to the Paramata should be that we should possess the firmness that can enable us to attain those virtues.

Now Achunkari became a seeker of salvation. Therefore she could not give up her tenderness, serenity and forgiveness. The story of a potter woman illustrates this point very well.

A POTTER WOMAN'S TENDER WORDS: THE SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS AND TENDERNESS ESSENTIAL FOR ONE WHO SEEKS SALVATION:

Once a potter-woman went to a town to sell pots. She had loaded the pots on a donkey. In the town, whenever buyers came up, she sold her pots to them speaking to them tenderly. There was one speciality with that woman. She adopted a special method to make the donkey walk straight. She spoke to it in a tender and affectionate voice. She said "Go on sister: Go straight sister! Go on straight." When she did not even speak harshly, beating the donkey was out of the question. There was no stick in her hand; nor was there any trace of harshness in her voice.

The people who heard her speak tenderly to the donkey were astonished for these reasons:-

(1) Donkeys do not walk straight unless they are beaten with a whip. Yet here she never beat the donkey; but she merely spoke to it in a tender manner.

(2) 'Who spoke soft and tender words to a donkey?' An illiterate potter-woman spoke such words! That too not to any noble man; but to a donkey! The donkey was restive; the potter-woman was illterate; and her words were pleasant; sweet, and tender.

Once, someone asked the potter-woman, "Sister, why do you speak so tenderly to a donkey saying "Go on sister! Go on".

The reply given by the potter-woman is worthy of remembrance and of being practised in our life. She said "I do not want to pollute my mind and voice. I do know that the donkey sometimes walks in a reverse direction; but I have to eke out my livelihood now with its help and throughout my life also, I have to get work from it. When that is so, how can I get angry with it and speak harshly to it?

Enough: The potter-woman had made this determination. "In this lofty human birth, I should keep a restraint on my mind and voice". And the potter-woman said further "If I develop the habiit of speaking angrily to the donkey and of becoming irritated, I may owing to that bad habit speak to my customers also in the same manner; and that will upset my business. The women who come to buy pots cause a lot of headache to me. They keep bargaining. They strike the pots with small stones to see if they are well baked and strong or not. If I develop the habit of speaking angrily I will speak in the same manner to such customers also and they will not come to me to buy pots. Moreover they will also prevent others from buying pots from me; and so, I have to speak to all women tenderly saying "sister". In order to develop this habit, I have to speak tenderly even to this donkey".

Just see! The matter of attaining felicity in the next birth and of attaining Moksha may be a far cry; but even in this life, harshness in voice is undesirable and harmful in the endeavours to earn money and in carrying out business. This matter is worth deep consideration.

Our good fortune is incomplete. In our life, for the most part, we have to deal with ordinary men; not with great men; and they are not so generous and noble-minded. Now if we continue the habit of speaking harshly and angrily we have to lose the affection and respect of those people. Moreover that habit will continue throughout life. Consequently it will follow us to the next birth. Have we to

carry our anger to the next birth? Is it not our duty to carry with us to the next birth, such virtues as tenderness, amity, tolerance and forgiveness?

We should remember that in this lofty human birth our duty is to attain the virtues of sweetness and tenderness, in respect of our utterances and thoughts. We have developed the qualities of anger and pride, which characterize scorpions and cobras, through countless lives, but now, in this birth we have to attain the spirit of forgiveness and tolerance.

Achunkari Bhatta made a firm determination not to give way to anger; not to be arrogant; not to speak harshly or to behave rudely, so that she might attain spiritual elevation and the reformation of her soul. She also made a determination to practise the virtues of forgiveness and self-restraint. Therefore, she maintained the virtues of amity, tolerance and forgiveness in thought, word and deed.

An adorer of Dharma should not get angry whatever might be the loss, resulting from such an attitude.

Question: But if such loss occurs again and again should we not get angry? Would we not get angry?

Answer: No. This is the key to avoid anger, - "Think often and often deeply about our own nature, our thoughts and our feelings". The story of a minister illustrates this truth, and it is worth consideration. If you want to retain the spirit of forgiveness, think of the nature of your lame servant and frustrate your anger.

FRUSTRATE ANGER
THE STORY OF A MINISTER AND HIS LAME SERVANT.

A certain minister who was in the Court of a King was a man of a very cool temperament. In his endeavours to secure and ensure peace and prosperity for his subjects, he sat in front of his mansion and heard calmly, the problems and grievnces of the people and he planned proper schemes on that basis and implemented them.

One morning, he thus sat before his mansion, giving replies to the questions of the people. At that time, an ignorant and intellectually deficient man came to him and began to speak incoherently. The Minister was a Minister. Moreover, he sat in his seat as a minister of the State. How could he behave like an ignorant man while dealing with an ignorant man? Even when the others spoke foul language, he listened to them in a cool and soft manner, and spoke to them in a tender and soft manner. But when that ignorant man spoke highly abusive and shameful words, the minister's son who sat near him became angry and shouted addressing the guards; "Look here guards! Why are you quiet? What are you looking at? Why are you standing silent seeing all this? Catch him and whip him."

But the Minister who possessed a cool and serene temperament said changing the tenor of the talk "Look, dear son! I forgot to tell you. Our King is going to visit us tomorrow. We have to make the necessary arragements to receive the King and especially, we should tell this lame servant that the King is coming tomorrow, therefore, tomorrow he should not seem a lame servant here. The King should not think that we have employed a ridiculous servant".

NEVER BE ANGRY WITH AN ANGRY MAN:

Hearing the words of the Minister, his son said "But father! How is it possible? This servant is lame. How can he change his gait and manner? Therefore, he will remain lame, as he is."

At this juncture, the minister communicated a sublime message to his son "Look son! A lame man cannot change his gait. In the same manner, we should not give up our serenity. Moreover if a lame servant cannot change his gait and remains lame, we do not get angry with him. In the same manner, if some ignorant and foul-mouthed people cannot change their manner, we should not get angry with them. And here is another important point; "An ignorant man may say anything but how can we learned lose our patience and calmness? We should not give them up". This is a message to be borne in mind.

These words of the minister set forth the art of leading a happy and peaceful life. Achunkari also taught her soul from her own experience, the lesson that it should not lose its serenity. That was why though the three bottles full of the precious oil were broken she did not get angry.

Here you think of the life of Sharman Bhagwan Mahavir Swami. Mahavir Bhagwan was born in a royal family; he was brought up in the lap of royal splendour and luxury. For thirty years, he grew up in the midst of such extreme affection and love that no one offended him. But his Highness, Mahavir Bhagwan, after he undertook the Deeksha, was attacked by many wicked people. He tolerated it with extreme calmness and peace, eventhough he possessed a very slender and tender royal body. He also put up with the excessive hardships which he faced in the anarya desh (an uncivilized country). He always remained cheerful with the spirit of forgiveness.

It is to be believed that he observed this principle when he was carrying out spiritual endeavours, "There should be no encounter; but there should be the spirit of tolerance and forgiveness".

उवसमसारं खु सामण्णं

The essence of Sadhutva is to be patient, forgiving and serene, with passions pacified. We should learn this great lesson from Mahavirdev's life and teach it to others .

Bhagwan Shri Thirthankardev has issued this commandment, "Anger, pride, deception and avarice which are called Kashayas (Passions & ill sentiments) are dangerous internal enemies of the soul. The loss, that no external enemy can cause to us, these inner enemies can bring about".

We should be extremely cautious in restraining and discarding these foul sentiments, like anger and pride. How cautious King Udayan was is illustrated by this story.

KING UDAYAN SOUGHT THE FORGIVENESS OF THE SINNER CHANDAPRADYOTA.

There lived a king by name Chandpradyot, He abducted a youthful and beautiful lady attendant from King Udayan's palace. He also carried away with her from Udayan's palace an idol of the Arihant created by the deity, Vidyunmali made out of original Goshirsha sandal wood. King Udayan invaded his city with his large army. In the battle, Chandapradyot was defeated, and he was captured alive. Taking him in a trap, King Udayan set off towards his city. On the way, he had to halt at a place to spend the Chaturmas (Monsoon). Some days later, the Paryushan festival had to be celebrated. On account of the great festival, King Udayan fasted on that day, i.e. carried on the

Upavas-Vrat. Hence, the cook went to Chandapradyot and asked him: "What food should I prepare for you?" Chandrapradyot said "You were not asking me this question on other days. Why are you asking me this question today?".

The cook said, "Every day I used to serve you the same food as prepared for his Excellency. But since today happens to be the Samvatsari Festival, and the King is fasting, no food is to be prepared for him. So I have come to ask you what food I may prepare for you".

On hearing it, Chandrapradyot entertained the suspicion that this might be a conspiracy to serve him poisoned food. He thought "Probably, they are planning to make an end of me here". With this suspicion, he said "Brother! you have done a good thing in reminding me of the festival today. I too fast today".

Later, the cook conveyed this information to the King Udayan. The King thought, "If Chandapradyot fasts on the day of the Paryushan festival, he has become a fellow-member of my faith - Jain dharma. Moreover, on the day of Samvatsarik festival it is my duty to seek the forgiveness of the fellow-members of my faith ; otherwise I will be an infidel, a disbeliever".

At once, King Udayan approached Chandapradyot, released him from imprisonment and removing his fetters with which he was bound, said to him: "I have caused great anguish to you ; kindly forgive me".

Who should seek forgiveness, and from whom? Should a man who has not committed any sin or offence seek the forgiveness of a man who is a sinner and an offender? But King Udayan sought the forgiveness of a great sinner, Chandapradyot. He thought "Though I have not

committed any offence or sin ; though I am serene and self-restrained, when a fellow member of my faith fasting today adores the Paryushan Festival I should also in the adoration of the Festival abandon the evil sentiments towards him and beg his forgiveness, because he experiences a set-back on account of me. I should free him and free myself from ill sfeeling; and this is possible only by means of "Forgiveness," i.e. seeking his forgiveness".

What a lofty idea! Passion i.e. 'Kashaya' means Samsar. Those who do not relish the Samsar should not also retain passions. Their greatest endeavour should be to pacify their passions so that they may get the opportunity of swimming on the waves of the sublime ocean of "Samatva" and "Upasham" i.e. equanimity and serenity. That brings about spiritual elevation and development.

Spiritual elevation is brought about not by anger or by developing an angry temperament, but by forgiveness, tolerance and peace.

Spiritual strength develops not by anger but by means of forgiveness. Anger destroys spiritual strength.

SUDARSHAN SETH'S FORGIVENESS, EQUANIMITY AND COMPASSION :

Sudarshan Seth who was in meditation, outside the city, was kidnapped by the queen and she made amorous advances to him but the Seth did not accept them. Then the queen made a false accusation against him. Here, the fault lay with the queen. Yet the King, acting merely on the false complaint of his queen, without making any enquiries ordered Sudarshan Seth to be impaled though the seth was noble and absolutely innocent. The King, of course, asked the Seth repeatedly what the truth was, yet Sudarshan Seth out of compassion for

the queen did not at all try to defend himself against the queen's false accusation that he had tried to molest her. He did not say anything to prove his purity and piety because his heart abounded with compassion for the queen. He knew the queen very well and could say to the king "Why do you ask me to explain the situation? Ask your santri police or the queen's attendant. He or she will tell you everything". If he had said this the secret would have come out. But if he had done so, the King would have grown furious with the queen and would have given her capital punishment or since she was a woman (women are said to be abalas, weaker vessels not worth killing) he would have driven her into some wild forest. The Seth owing to compassion for her was silent, because he did not like to cause such anguish to the queen. We too should practise this ideal of forgiveness, and for that reason, we should always keep thinking of the forgiveness that Sudharshan Seth extended to the queen. How serene was the Seth, though the queen committed such an enormity! Let any calamity befall me, but the poor queen should not suffer on account of my clarification or justification". What a mighty spring of compassion surged out of the heart of the Seth!!

Just as anger, arrogance and other passions abound in the hearts of ignoble (Papatmas) people, similarly forgiveness, serenity, compassion, amity and equanimity should abound in heart of noble (Dharmatmas) people.



A brief introduction of the writer Gurudev

Acharya Srimad Vijaya Bhuvanbhanu Soorishvarji Maharaj Sahib, is the spiritual mentor and guide of more than two hundred Jain munis. For the last fifty six years, he has been leading the austere life of a Sadhu with joy and enthusiasm. For thousands of days he has been eating simple food which is devoid of oil, ghee, chillies, milk, curds, buttermilk, sweets and fruits and that too only once a day. He has been carrying out extraordinary spiritual austerities. He has made an indepth study of the Hindu,Buddhistic Logical books and Jain Shastras.

He ... family in Ahmedabad (Gujarat). He passec ... examination and the first examination conducte ... itute of Bankers of England with distinction securing c ...

N ..., though he is seventynine years of age, he always takes care of the spiritual welfare of his disciples and devotees. He has been providing excellent spiritual guidance to thousands of people by logical and spiritual sermons and through interesting and instructive articles in the weekly magazine "Divyadarshan" Gujarati and fortnightly magazine 'Divyadarshan' Hindi.

- We salute the holy feet of the great Gurudev !
- Oh ! Gurudev kindly show us the right path !
- Oh ! you great Shraman, kindly bestow upon us the right knowledge.



SHRIMATI KESHIBAI – A SPLENDID STAR IN THE FIRMAMENT OF DHARMA

A RADIANT STAR IN HUMAN FORM

The noble lady, Shrimati Keshibai was born in the town of Tavav, in Rajasthan. She was the wife of the great Shravak Poonamchandji. She embodied the qualities of nobility, piety and magnificent magnanimity and led a life of religious excellence and spiritual elevation. She performed the Upadan austerity with the penance of eight fastings and Ayambil Oli etc. She had attained absolute mental peace and emotional and spiritual equanimity by means of the Namaskar Mahamantra and many religious ceremonies. Her sublime life exercised a profound influence on her children Shri Dungarmalji and Shri Kapoorchandji whose fame and prestige have spread among the Jain Sanghs throughout Bharat. They have donated lakhs of rupees for the construction of Jain temples, Upashrayas, Pathashalas, Ayambil bhavans, Shelters for animals (Panjarapol) and other institutions besides donating enormous amounts for the publication of Dharmic literature. It is really extraordinary that they have exemplified in the modern age the humanity, magnanimity and nobility of ancient Jain stars.

Family members.